

Postcards from Iraq

Sharing the good news ...

By SFC David A. Eckert
NCOIC Victory Area Office, Baghdad Province
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I am SFC David A. Eckert a resident of Chester, California. I am a proud member of the California Army National Guard with 17 years of military experience. I also bring to the rebuilding effort 25 years of construction experience.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the 40th Engineers attached to the United States Army Corp of Engineers, Gulf Region Division. The overall mission is to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. As the mission is passed from the highest officials down to the soldier teams, each soldier finds a purpose. My responsibilities in the Victory Area Office, Baghdad, Iraq have been as Non-Commissioned Officer in charge. The NCOIC has many duties one of which includes security management of projects intended to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi public. During this deployment I have worked around over 21,000 members of coalition forces from various nations, Iraqi Local Nationals, Third Country Nationals, Contracted Security, U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines.

The rewards of our unit mission include safer operations, and living conditions for troops, local nationals, and third country nationals. Rome wasn't built in a day, neither will Iraq. I applaud the personal strength and courage of all men and women working together on a daily basis in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This year-long tour has been a challenge filled with happy sad times alike. And there's no question I would do it again in a heartbeat. I'm proud of what we're doing here and know first-hand the gratitude of the Iraqi people. Seeing their appreciative smiles and hearing their heartwarming thanks are the moments that make this all worthwhile.

I'll soon be returning home to a family whose support has been incredible. I'll share with them the "good news" of what's happening here. We are making a difference.

**SFC David A. Eckert
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